STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N – Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 – (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building – 1111 Washington Street SE – Olympia, WA

MITIGATED DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (MDNS)

Name of Proposal: STILLWATER SNOQUALMIE RIVER REVETMENT REMOVAL AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Description of Proposal:

The proposed project involves the removal of approximately 2,100 lineal feet of revetment along the right bank reach of the Snoqualmie River. The purpose of the project is to improve habitat for fish and wildlife by restoring natural riverine processes and increasing edge habitat for juvenile salmonids. One thousand lineal feet of the revetment is located on the Stillwater Unit, which is owned and managed by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The remainder of the revetment to be removed is located on private property as part of an agreement between Wild Fish Conservancy and the property owners

The revetment is made of imported fill material (gravel mined from the Snoqualmie River), riprap, and other material such as concrete slabs used to continually reinforce the facility over the years. Large-dimensioned pieces of riprap that have sloughed off of the revetment into the river will be removed from the toe. All riprap that is removed will be hauled off-site. A cap will be constructed on the upstream portion of the revetment to prevent undercutting of the terminated end. Vegetation along the same reach will need to be removed as well and approximately 5.5 acres will require clearing to construct the temporary access road, staging area, and revetment removal. All trees and vegetation cleared will be retained on-site with rootwads intact to provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Approximately 261 trees will be salvaged. A flood fence will be installed on the uppermost bench of the right bank to protect recent revegetation activities. The steep revetment banks will be re-contoured. A temporary road will be constructed to provide access to the revetment. The upper bench of the project will be re-vegetated.

An old culvert crossing on the gravel access road from SR-203 will need to be upgraded to accommodate continuous hauls by large dump trucks transporting revetment material to off-site locations. The culvert services a small agricultural ditch that supports coho salmon and cutthroat trout populations. There are no fish passage issues with the existing culvert. A temporary crossing will be put in place until all hauling is completed at which point a permanent replacement culvert will be installed.

Three modeling efforts have been completed to assess potential impacts to upstream and downstream properties. All three models have indicated the proposed project actions are not likely to adversely impact upstream and downstream properties. The project area of influence is

contained within the properties owned by WDFW and the Gaisford/O'Hanley property. Agricultural lands are not expected to be impacted by project actions. Overall, the project can be expected to decrease floodwater levels during the 100-year return interval flood by up to 0.4 feet upstream of the project.

The proponent shall incorporate the following mitigation measures into the project:

The project itself is a restoration action that will ultimately restore historical natural function to the wetlands and floodplain and is intended to aid in the recovery of threatened species of salmonids. Removing the revetment will restore the natural processes of cut and fill alluviation and channel migration, the processes that historically drove the formation of wetlands in this portion of the valley.

Measure to reduce temporary impacts:

The project will involve working in the water for a period of up to 20 days while toe rock is being removed from the toe of the revetments using heavy equipment. This work will inevitably produce some turbidity and displace fish from the immediate work areas. To minimize impacts, flows will be diverted around the work area or velocities reduced by placing supersacks or other temporary diversion structures in the Snoqualmie River. There are gravel bars at the upstream ends of the work areas that may allow a diversion around the work area possible. The work areas will be in water, but there will be no or very low velocity in the work area. Clean water diverted around the work areas will mix slowly with any turbid water released at the downstream end of the work areas where there will be an eddy formed by slow/fast water interface. The rate of discharge of turbid water into this clean stream of water will be managed to maintain WA State Water Quality standards (WQS) by controlling the rate of rock removal and slowing discharge of turbid water at the downstream end of the work areas with silt booms and/or pumps as necessary. These structures and the rate of in-water work will be managed to minimize turbidity and maintain state water quality standards throughout the in-water work window. All work will be done in late summer, when flows in the Snoqualmie River are at their lowest.

Water diversion will not only minimize turbidity during construction, but will also reduce the need to remove fish and the potential of harm. Diversion or reducing velocities was chosen as the preferred construction method because impacts to salmonids are likely to be less than with the dewatering method and it is more feasible in this large river setting. It is likely that work associated with toe rock removal will quickly displace fish holding around the bank to other areas up and downstream of the immediate work area where there is less activity and turbidity. This movement by fish will not involve direct handling or harming of fish. While there may be temporary displacement from the immediate work area, this impact is considerably less than that of capturing, handling and releasing fish upstream of the site during a large scale dewatering of the mainstem river.

As a result of this project, substantial erosion and deposition throughout the riverbanks and floodplain within the project reach are expected and desirable. Revetment removal will allow more frequent and higher-velocity flows to leave the main channel of the Snoqualmie River and flow across the Snoqualmie River floodplain. Such flows will likely initiate and maintain

secondary flow paths through the floodplain. These channels will enhance rearing and refuge habitat for juvenile Chinook salmon and other salmonids. Sediment mobilized and transported from the site is not expected to result in measurable differences in turbidity levels downstream because this erosion will occur during high flow events and cannot be differentiated from background levels.

Since erosion and deposition in the floodplain are desirable outcomes of this project, standard erosion control methods are not appropriate at this site. The following practices and rationale will be used to assure that water quality is maintained:

- As outlined above, high velocity flows will be diverted from the in-water work areas to minimize turbidity and maintain State Water Quality Standards during construction.

- Some of the site will be left untreated (bare ground) after grading is completed until late winter or early spring of 2014. Bare ground and depositional areas are likely to recruit naturally regenerating early successional tree and shrub species like alder, cottonwood and willow.

- Smaller rain events may release sediment from disturbed areas immediately adjacent to the project site. This release is unlikely to cause downstream water quality to fall below state water quality standards due to the magnitude of flows in the Snoqualmie River at this time.

- Although substantial fine sediment could be generated from the site during flood events, the site's contribution of turbidity to the mainstem river is unlikely to be significant or measurable during these larger floods.

Proponent/Applicant:

Wild Fish Conservancy
PO Box 402
15629 Main Street NE.
Duvall, WA 98019
Contact Person: Micah Wait
(206) 953-9305
micah@wildfishconservancy.org

Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Stillwater Unit of WDFW's Snoqualmie Wildlife Area, King County, Washington near Carnation; Southwest1/4 of Section 04 , Township 25 North, Range 07 East WM and the Gaisford/O'Hanley property at 8519 Carnation-Duvall Road NE, Carnation, WA. 98104-6705

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the

environment. Therefore, state law[1] does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this mitigated determination of nonsignificance (MDNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this MDNS according to state rules.[2] We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the MDNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or MDNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. This means we must receive your comments by **April 17, 2013**.

Method of Comment:
The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.
You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

Responsible Official: Bob Zeigler

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section

Address: 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.[1]

If you have questions about this MDNS or the details of the proposal, contact Bob Zeigler at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call him at (360) 902-2578.

DATE OF ISSUE: **April 2, 2013** **SIGNATURE:** Bob Zeigler

Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)
2. WAC 197-11-340(2).

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